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ABSTRACT

This volume tells the story of women and school leadership in America from the common school era to the present, revealing how teaching became women's work and the school superintendency, men's. It also explores how this gendered division of roles and power has been maintained over the years. The first two chapters survey the creation of sex-segregated employment in 19th-century schooling. Focusing on the superintendency, chapter 3 discusses how the turn-of-the-century women's movement pushed women into school leadership positions despite informally enforced gender barriers and a backlash movement depicting single women administrators as socially dangerous spinsters and/or lesbians. Chapter 4 documents this postsuffrage backlash movement and the resulting gender-role polarization. During the 1940s and 1950s, more married women became administrators, attempting to project feminine exteriors while performing "male-identified" work. Chapter 5 elaborates on the quiet, rapid decline of female administrators from World War II to 1970. Chapter 6 documents how women's advocates attempted to work through legal and judicial systems to eliminate persistent sex inequalities in schooling and educational employment and explores subtle resistance to these efforts. Included are appendices with historical data, an index, and numerous chapter endnotes. (MLH)

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